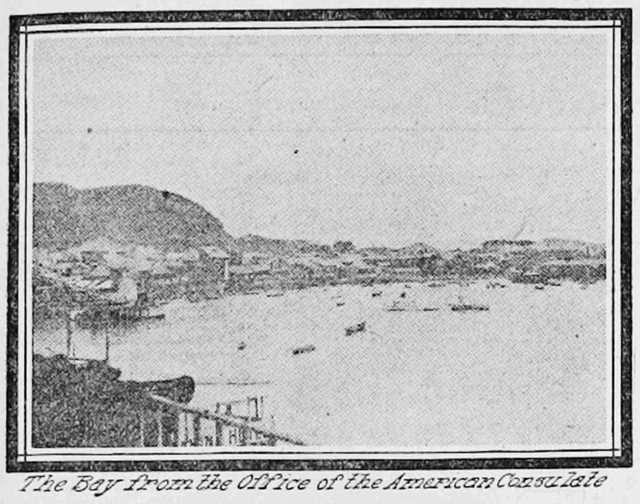
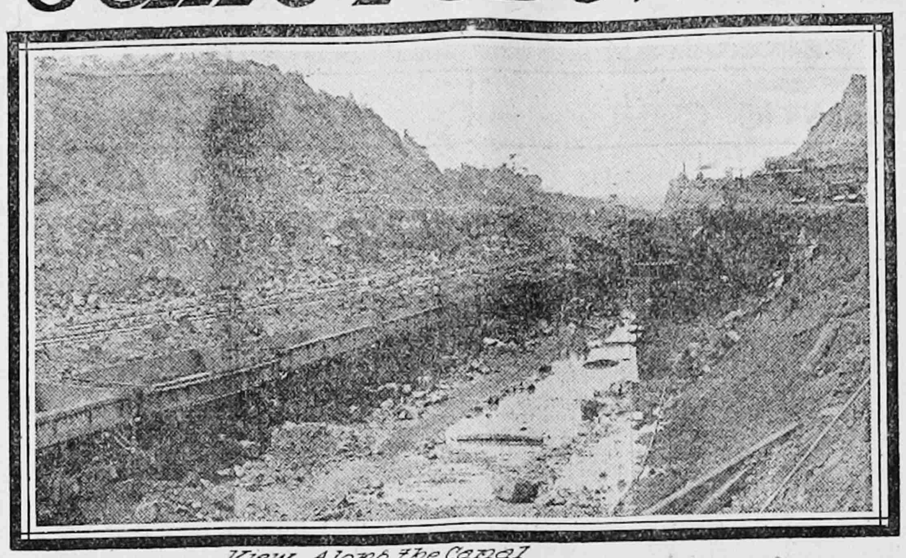
WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO WITH THE CANAL?



The Bay from the Office of the American Consulate



View Along the Canal

National Theater Decorated in Honor of Taft

Bolivar Ave Colon

A Street Scene in Panama

ON the 21st day of November last a portion of the rock toe at the upstream end of the Gatun Dam sank about 20 feet. News of this occurrence immediately started a wide discussion of the much-vexed question of the safety of the structure on which the entire lock-level plan of construction depends. The matter was greatly exaggerated by the press, one of the newspapers going so far as to declare that the discovery had been made of an enormous lake underlying the Canal Zone. This unfortunately was not true, otherwise the condition would have afforded a simple solution to the problem. With a large subterranean lake available, all that would be necessary would be to scrape off the covering, or peel it off, as one might a pie crust, and presto—a ready-made waterway at sea level or lower. As a matter of fact, the trouble does not seem to have been of a serious character, nor such as would raise apprehensions of the safety of the dam site. The commission gave out an emphatic statement to this effect, which was reinforced by a similar utterance of the chief engineer. These assurances would have been more satisfactory but for the fact that Mr. Taft announced his intention of investigating affairs on the spot, and the President appointed a commission of engineers to accompany him. More significant still was the declaration of the President, echoed by Mr. Taft, to the effect that in case conditions seemed to warrant it, a change would be made to the sea-level plan. Considering that these two officials were responsible for Congress having adopted the report of the minority of the board of consulting engineers in favor of a lock-level canal, their utterances looked very much like a preparation of the public for a change of opinion.

It is a disquieting thought that since the French undertook the canal project, 30 years ago, practically all the leading engineers of the world have been called upon to investigate and report on the scheme. Our predecessors had their Comite Technique and we our board of consulting engineers, both bodies composed of international authorities of the highest repute. In addition, numerous experts have made examinations of the ground and the plans and have expressed their opinions. The results, if collected, would fill several good sized volumes with the most conflicting conclusions. The trip of another body of especially appointed engineers to the isthmus raises the question whether we are at all sure of our ground, or whether we are trying to justify ourselves in a course which is contrary to the weight of the best technical advice that has been given to us. If the Gatun Dam site is as safe as the commission declares it to be and no new complications have arisen, then the arguments which swayed Congress in its decision to adopt the lock-level plan are as potent today as ever they were.

The ideal waterway would be a strait, which vessels could enter directly from the ocean and in which they could steam freely, pass one another and turn about. Such a waterway is entirely out of the question. Even though it were possible to construct it, the cost would be so great as to render it a heavily losing investment for all time. As a matter of fact, however, no canal through the Isthmus of Panama is practicable without locks. The difference between high water in one and the other ocean is 22 feet, and, failing regulating works, the tide through the canal would prevent navigation during a large proportion of each day. The most liberal plan for a sea-level canal contemplates no more than from 150 to 200 feet of bottom width, and it is admitted that this would cost twice as much as the proposed lock-level waterway and take twice as long to build. The foreign members of the board were unanimous in favoring the sea-level type, and this may be explained by the fact that in Europe the Suez Canal is the standard of excellence. Furthermore, very large locks are unknown in the practice of European engineers, and they expressed serious distrust of the huge structures contemplated. On the other hand, while there are no such locks as those proposed now in the United States, the engineers believe that the experience of the large locks at the Soo and the Welland Canals fully justify the adoption of the plans for those at Panama. The earthquake hazard was also advanced as an argument against the lock-level waterway, but it does not appear to be a very strong one. It is true that a comparatively slight shock might derange the locks and obstruct navigation for a while, but a violent convulsion would be apt to work greater destruction upon the canal on sea-level than that at the 85-foot elevation. It must be remembered that in connection with the former there must be a number of dams, levees, sluices and other works liable to damage by earthquake.

The main feature of the lock-level plan is a large lake 110 square miles in extent, which will be formed by shutting in the Chagres Valley by the Gatun Dam and impounding the waters of the streams that flow into it. This lake will form the summit level of the canal. At the Atlantic end of it a broad channel about three miles in length will lead into the ocean. The lake will afford open navigation for a distance of 23 miles, or more than half the total length of the waterway. The Culebra Cut will be traversed by a channel 200 feet in width, and the remaining distance will be mainly occupied by a lake five miles across, filling a depression between the divide and the Pacific Ocean. The total length of the channel, which extends several miles into the ocean at either end, is nearly 50 miles. Of this only one-seventh is less than 300 feet in width, while more than two-thirds of it is 500 feet wide or over.

Briefly stated, the reasons advanced by the minority of the board of consulting engineers for their belief that a lock canal is the better one for the United States to construct are as follows: 1. Greater capacity for traffic than afforded by the narrow waterway proposed by the board. 2. Greater safety for ships and less danger of interruption to traffic, by reason of the wider and deeper channels which the lock canal makes possible at smaller cost. 3. Quicker passage across the isthmus for large ships or a large traffic. 4. Materially less time required for construction. 5. Materially less cost.

It is to be hoped that the question of plan will be finally laid to rest by Congress in its extra session, and that the work will be pushed to completion without any serious setbacks. But the mere building of a canal at Panama is not the object in view. That is but a means to an end. What are we going to do with the canal when it is finished. If it were to be opened tomorrow, it would be almost useless to us. At least, it would be of less service to America than to any other commercial nation. We have no merchant marine, to begin with, and unless we remedy that defect before 1915 we shall open a canal for the benefit of European countries, with little advantage to ourselves. Then, we have no foothold in the markets of the Orient, and unless we set about getting one at once we shall find ourselves shut out. Great Britain and Germany have been making extra efforts to extend and strengthen their spheres of commercial influence in the East since we undertook the construction of the Panama Canal, and their merchants wonder at the supine indifference of the American manufacturer. It will not do for our people to take the attitude that they will go after those markets when the way is open. Whilst the oriental trade is a highly profitable and desirable one, it is a difficult one to establish. Asiatics are extremely conservative and influenced by customs and prejudices of which we know nothing. In order to do business with them it is necessary to study their requirements and inclinations and to gain their confidence. This takes time and patience—much more of both than our shippers realize. American manufacturers who hope to sell goods in Asia after the opening of the Panama Canal must set about preparing the ground now, if they are to enjoy any appreciable degree of success.

Unless we can make the canal a paying undertaking from the commercial point of view, it had better have been left alone. As a strategic agency it will be of little account. It will enable us in time of peace to move our vessels expeditiously from one side of the Continent to the other, but in case of war it may be more detrimental than useful. To fortify the canal is quite out of the question, or even to guard it effectually. A stick of dynamite in the hands of a Japanese Hobson, say, would be sufficient to wreck the locks at Gatun and put the entire waterway out of commission. Its neutrality will not be observed by a determined belligerent. In case of war the power first on the spot or having the strongest navy will seize and hold the canal. In the affair with Russia Japan showed an enterprising appreciation of the value of a coup de guerre. Should she design hostilities upon the United States she would, before declaring war, prepare for a dash to the Panama Canal, and if our fleet happened to be elsewhere, we might be led to wish that we had never made a cut through the isthmus.

FORBES LINDSAY.

Author of "Panama: The Isthmus and the Canal."

The Credit of Man and Wife.

THE woman who lives alone, whether married or unmarried, is, aside from some exceptionable circumstances, liable for all the goods she may obtain on credit. If she obtains this credit by false pretenses she is also personally liable to the criminal authorities.

If, however, the woman be married, and lives with her husband, the man is still in civil law regarded as the head of the household and the responsible person. The wife, therefore, is recognized as his agent by the law and can make him personally liable for the debts she contracts. Primarily she herself is never liable, even though she has property of her own and even earns wages for herself by personal labor.

If however credit be extended to the wife only, as shown by the talks when the credits are granted, or if the bills are made out in her name and the accounts on the creditor's books be kept in her name, then she can be made individually liable.

But it must be either the wife or the husband to whom the credit is extended. The creditor cannot take a choice of them in a way to give him a claim on both of them, if the other prove impossible to collect from.

The husband is responsible for necessities of life in every case. He is also responsible for certain sorts of things which to the poorer classes of persons would be considered by the courts as luxuries. It may be taken as a general rule that the husband can be held responsible for such bills as his wife makes when the articles are those commonly required by women in the same walk of life or social strata.

If a husband allows his wife a certain fixed sum for her keep and she spend this in other ways and then runs up bills in his name, he has been held by the courts as not liable. If a husband however should go to the theater with his wife while she has been wearing a certain very costly dress and later refuse to pay the bill, it has been held that although he made her a regular allowance, yet he was responsible for this particular dress, as he countenanced her wearing the same by going out in her company when she was attired in the gown.

A notice published in daily papers warning against credit extensions to a wife and the payment to her of a regular allowance, is always a bar against the husband being held responsible for his wife's debts. The whole matter is rather intricate and one which constantly interests married people the world over.

Australia's government savings banks have $204,871,324 on deposit, equal to $49.55 per capita of the total population of the commonwealth. The accounts average $162.75 each.

WITH ROOSEVELT IN AFRICA

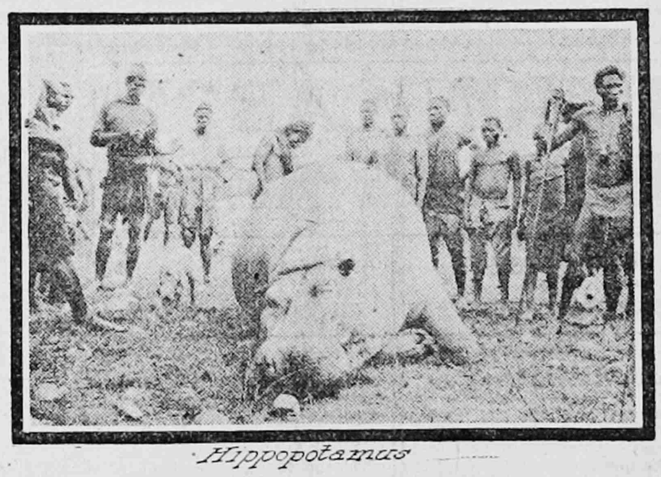
By Paul Thompson

Rhinoceros

Gazelle

Sable Antelope

Leopard at Bay



Hippopotamus

IN going away from the United States, theoretically that his successor to the presidency, W. H. Taft, may be in no wise hampered in his conduct of his office by his whilom sponsor, the ex-president combines business and pleasure in a most satisfactory manner. His career as a sportsman in various parts of the world proves conclusively that his forthcoming African trip represents one of his life ambitions. Whether he bags much or little game, it is safe to prophesy that he will be more than "delighted" with his experiences on the hitherto "Dark Continent," hereafter to be illuminated by the expansive smile of Mr. Roosevelt. His chances for scoring in his hunt are excellent, for the preparations have been most complete, nothing having been left undone which would insure the success of the trip. The country selected—British East Africa, principally near Lake Victoria Nyanza—has long been a great hunting-ground for adventurous sportsmen, and recent reports would indicate that plenty of game awaits the coming of the former chief executive of the United States.

In every sense an amateur expedition, though participated in by veterans in the hunting game, the sportsmen will shoot everything which their license allows. President Roosevelt's equipment will be more expensive than a professional's would be. One reason for this is that a taxidermist outfit will be carried, so that game may be cured and preserved immediately after it has been shot. A lion or leopard, for example, would be skinned at once, cleaned and treated with a preparation of alum. To protect it from beetles the skin will then be soaked in turpentine and a native runner will be dispatched immediately with it to the nearest post for preservation, as otherwise the numerous insects which infest the country would eat the skin full of holes and render it perfectly worthless.

Although the president and his party will hunt for everything that they are permitted to, the real sport and excitement will naturally come in chasing the big game, such as the elephant, rhinoceros and hippopotamus. It involves more courage and less cunning than getting the smaller and more dangerous carnivora. The general character of the expedition is best proved by the fact that it is not only a hunting, but a scientific exploration trip as well. Natural history materials will be gathered for the United States government collections, to be deposited with the Smithsonian Institute, at Washington, under whose direction this phase of the President's trip is undertaken. These specimens will be placed in the new United States National Museum, at Washington, D. C.

Leaving New York in March, the representatives of the institute will include the President and his son Kermit (who will be the official photographer for the party), Major Edgar A. Mearns, Medical Corps, U. S. A., retired; Edmund Heller, a California naturalist, who has won great fame, though a young man, now connected with the University of California, and J. Alden Loring, of the government scientific department, even more famous as a naturalist than Heller. R. J. Cunninghame, a famous African guide and explorer, English traveler and big-game hunter, will also join the party. It was under the direction of Mr. Cunninghame and Mr. Frederick Selous that the President's African outfit was gotten together and shipped from London. This equipment was shipped early in February for Mombasa, British East Africa, where the President's party first go ashore, and where they start on the journey inland. The Smithsonian Institute outfits the party with its scientific apparatus for curing and preserving the animals shot, but the President pays his own expenses. Mr. Roosevelt will kill the big game, the skins of which will be cured and the skeletons of which will be prepared for shipment to the United States.

Although the President does not expect to be in Mombasa for sometime, plans have been maturing at that place for his trip.

Sir Alfred Pease, whose guest the ex-president is to be while there, will entertain him at his splendid estate near Machachus. Mombasa, by the way, is a city of 30,000 inhabitants, only 200 of whom are white. There the party is to be joined by Philip McMillan, who returns from a tiger hunting expedition with Lord Minto in India, to act as host at his renowned shooting-box near Nairobi, which cost over a quarter of million dollars; it possesses within its limits every known adjunct of civilized comfort, including electric lights, telephones and baths, though located in the midst of the jungles. It is from here that the ex-president will make his real start for the interior.

Mr. Roosevelt's guide, Mr. Cunninghame, is already at Nairobi, where he is gathering carriers for the trip and perfecting the many small details requisite for so important an undertaking. An interesting story is told of his choice as guide. It appears that there were two guides of almost equal capacity under consideration, Mr. Cunninghame and a man named Judge. When it came to a choice between the two, it was found that the prominent sportsmen to whom the decision was left were equally divided on the matter. Discussion failed to change the partisans of either guide, and it finally had to be agreed to settle the matter by tossing up a coin. The coin was dipped and Cunninghame won.

To avoid the heavy rains of the wet season, the ex-president will be compelled to linger nearly three months near Mombasa. He is unlikely to cross Lake Victoria to enter Ugande much before December. If he waits until then, the dry season will be on for his 37-day march to Gondokoro, for which fine weather is desired.

Advices from the other side of the ocean manifest a great and growing interest on the part of sportsmen of all nations in Mr. Roosevelt's trip. Many big game enthusiasts are planning to go out on the same steamer with him, and one and all who are in a position to afford him aid or courtesy are eagerly proffering it to his representatives. The owner of the only herd of buffaloes in East Africa has already left his home in Cheshire, England, to make final arrangements for a drive of at least a thousand head for the ex-president.

It is from the buffaloes, wild pigs and rogue elephants alone, so experts declare, that Mr. Roosevelt can expect any strenuous combat. Lion hunting has been so much of a fad now for years that the king of beasts has been cowed into a state of subjection similar to that of his brethren of the menagerie, who eat gratefully from the hand and retain none of the fierceness of the primeval beast except such as survives in their looks. According to Winston Churchill, the African lion has been chased so assiduously and shot at so often with high explosive cartridges that he seldom makes his presence known now save after darkness has set in; then his plaintive moans may be heard as he prowls about like a hyena seeking such scraps of meat as have been thrown out of camp.

On his lion hunts, Mr. Roosevelt will be guided by Mr. Selous, who has a worldwide reputation as a hunter of the species. He will have for a mount one of the hardy ponies which alone seem to stand the climate of the region. Mr. Selous has been quoted as saying that he believes that there are hardly more than 3,000 adult elephants left south of the Zambesi River, but he confesses that he is not particularly familiar with this region, and others declare that there are this number in the Nairobi section alone. There appears to be but little doubt that the ex-president and his party will bag all the elephants, lions and giraffes they desire. According to one authority lions are as plentiful as baby carriages in Brooklyn. So do authorities differ. The hunters arise before daybreak and all the work of the camp is completed by midday. The blazing heat renders the afternoon useless except for a siesta. Not until just previous to sundown is any active campaign for game undertaken. At that time, the hunters, following the custom of the country, will dispose themselves upon the banks of the rivers, from which points of vantage the animals can be picked off as they come down to drink.

The party will travel amply provided with canned meats and groceries, but will necessarily depend upon their own prowess for fresh meats. Elephant meat is as tough as it looks, and few attempt to masticate it except the low-caste native bearers; even they do not consider it gastronomically fit until it has been hung long enough to become highly gamey. Waterbuck and zebra meat go into the same category as elephant meat. However, the hunters will find a food quite as palatable and nourishing as the best American beef. Oryx impala and all species of gazelles are luscious and tender, the delicacy of delicacies being the clip springer and diddik gazelles. Save for a certain cut alongside the backbone, the hartebeest must also be put in the inedible class.

Over 150 natives will be needed as bearers when the outfit starts into the interior. Each of these will be burdened with 60 pounds of baggage, but the major portion of this will be the rice requisite for his own consumption. These porters are mostly natives of the Swahili tribe, among whom there is sharp competition for the places. Only the readiest and lustiest have been selected. The expedition, for which, by the way, the local name is "safari," will also be accompanied by two native policemen bearing Snyder rifles, who are known as askuris, also by a retinue of cooks and cook's mates. The gun bearers are of higher caste, they can be relied upon for no service other than carrying the guns of the hunters. Their local title is shikarees, and they belong to the Somali tribe. The head man of the natives rejoices in the euphonious title of the Neapara and on march Mr. Roosevelt will be known as "Bwana Kubwa," or the "Great Master." Mr. Roosevelt's fitness for this title has been amply demonstrated in Albany and Washington. He can be safely relied upon to live up to it even among the uncivilized.

From the first publication of Mr. Roosevelt's intention of making this excursion into the fever-laden lands of East Africa many have been the expressions of solicitude for the effect upon his health of the new climate and conditions which he has shown such a determination to face. It is hardly necessary to state that the advice voluntarily afforded him by hunters and travelers of all nations will enable him to avail himself of every known precaution against danger and disease, but he is of an age when none but the venturesome take on a trip through the jungle. Tropical fevers abound. Quinine has to be absorbed, not as a cure, but as a preventive. If a traveler in those parts has any physical weakness, Africa is likely to discover and develop it. Few white men have been found capable of enduring the climate for a greater period than four or five years, and among those who have spent any length of time in that region, whether for work or sport, the mortality has been heavy. Mr. Roosevelt has the manifest advantage of entering the arena in apparently the most rugged health. Despite his onerous official work of the past 10 years, he has never ceased for a moment to devote a wholesome portion of his time to active exercise. He is unquestionably in splendid trim for the venture. The climate alone is to be dreaded, but the ex-President has defeated so many apprehensions in his time that the "croakers" have about given him up as a subject upon whom to cast the shining light of their wisdom. Only a mild shaking of older heads still persists.

Corsican Funeral Rites.

WHEN a Corsican dies he or she is always buried in a brand-new costume made for this special purpose. This does not merely mean a shroud to cover the corpse, but a brand-new costume, just like is worn on holiday occasions among these people.

The expense among the poorer classes, and most of the people are eternally on the starvation line, takes up all the savings frequently of a lifetime. In Corsica the heat of the climate requires burial within 24 hours, so as soon as a sickness assumes a serious phase the family and neighbors get together and go to work hard on the new costume for the expected corpse.

Funeral rites are of the greatest importance in Corsica. A striking feature of funerals is the presence of improvisatores, that is, women who make up a sort of blank verse poem in memory of the dead. Of course they come by custom to make up pretty much the same thing, with just enough personal references to each corpse to make the poetry belong to the proper occasion.

These funeral poems are chanted in a sing-song voice over the body and some of the poetry is said to be extremely beautiful in a funereal sort of way.

When the body is being carried out of the house these women mourners hang out the second-story windows and shriek lamentations and tear out handfuls of hair and drop them onto the coffin. Also there is another set of hired women mourners who walk ahead of the coffin and cry their grief aloud, tearing their faces with their finger nails. The more they disfigure themselves the bigger the pay they get.

The widow of Corsica must wear tied over her eyes a strip of black cloth. This she keeps on for a week. It is supposed to stay on all this time and she is led about her house and fed by women friends. No room in the house of the dead man can be cleaned for a week nor can any fire be lighted in it.

The cemeteries are filled with stone huts having a flat roof. In these are kept lighted lamps and offerings of flowers and poetry are placed there for the souls of the departed. These rites seem peculiar to Americans, but they are common in all oriental countries and along the Mediterranean.

Conditions in Australia Booming.

BECAUSE the celebrated boom period in gold mining in Australia died out years ago the public as a general thing has grown to consider the biggest island in the world as a sort of dead proposition from the standpoint of rapid growth in population and in wealth. Yet nothing could be further from the truth, for Australia sent out last year more gold than ever the island produced in its history, totaling in all $100,000,000 in gold bullion, whereas in 1893 there was only $15,000,000 mined.

However, the fact that the gold fields are all now practically long since staked out and belong to organized companies, with thousands of stockholders, has taken the Australian gold fields out of the newspapers, and only accounts of romantic discoveries of proportionately small quantities of gold by a poor starving miner are occasionally seen. On the other hand, the fact that Australian gold companies have grown enormously rich during the past few years has only been mentioned in the annual reports of the various organized companies owning the mines.

But Australia has another source of wealth not so spectacular as the gold fields, but yielding far greater sums of money—these are the vast herds of superb sheep, whose wool is acknowledged the very finest in all the world. It takes a flock of 2,000 sheep in Australia to keep the average family in comfort.

The land needed to handle this many sheep and to allow ground for wheat growing, in addition, with all the necessary tools, will cost about $20,000.

Of course, few emigrants to Australia are worth this full amount, but the government of the various provinces sell the land on long and easy terms, and so $5,000 is amply sufficient to start the family.

So rapidly do these families acquire independence that in from three to five years they usually pay off the indebtedness of the government. This is shown, of course, by the books kept of the amounts owing to the government by the emigrants. Wages run from $2 to $4 per day for skilled and unskilled laborers, and this island is really an extremely wealthy section of the globe.